Numb. 93

The Female Tatler.

Written by a Society of Ladies.

Nec Sequior Sexus magnis virtutibus impar.

From **Friday** February 3, to **Monday** February 6, 1710.

Artesia's Day.

From my CLOSET.

YESTERDAY a Gentlewoman that came to pay me a Visit before it was due, on purpose to Rail at us, told me, that She and all Sober People were most heinously Scandaliz'd at *Lucinda*'s last Paper; is it possible, said she, *Artesia*, that any body should promise in the beginning of a Discourse not to speak in Praise of Women, but what had been Good as well as Great, and at the same time make Panegyricks upon *Suicide*, and close it with such a horrid Instance of Self-Murther as that of the wicked *Arria*? This instead of promoting Virtue and Morality, is flying in the Face of Religion, and subverting the Laws of all Christian Countries.—— This she said, and a great deal more than I had leisure to remember, with so much Zeal and Eagerness, that I had not the Liberty of saying one word in my Sister's Justification. She call'd us all the Heathens and Deists she could think of, and would not allow me to Answer one Syllable, till quite out of Breath with Raving, she flung away in a Passion as she came. Reflecting on the mighty Offence this Lady complained of, I don't think it will be amiss to say something upon this Head to all that might labour under the same Scruple, and shall have more Patience than this passionate Gentlewoman to hear me.

As it is not the Business of *Tatlers* to meddle with Religious Matters, whenever we speak of Virtues we only mean those Moral ones, as Fortitude, Temperance, Chastity, *&c.* in which almost all Nations and Ages have agreed, and in this Sense every body that has followed the Rules which the Age and Country he lived in had of Virtue, may justly be call'd Virtuous. As to *Suicide*, I am so far from justifying it, that I think nothing more Enormous; but tho in Christians it is so heinous a Crime, from what I have said it follows, that it ought not to be counted the same in Heathens, that far from being bless'd with any reveal'd Knowledge of the Sinfulness of it, were encourag'd to and taught it, both by the Precepts and Examples of their most Venerable *Philosophers*. But whether this Principle of Savage Valour, abstract from all Religious Considerations, must be call'd a Vice or a Virtue, I shall not trouble my Head with, I am satisfy'd it serves the purpose for which I wanted it, that is, to shew, that the Men can't boast of that Intrepidity and Fortitude of the Soul, which is required in despising Death, more than the Women, In the heat of Battel, the Fear of Death is forgot even by People of indifferent Courage, and the Noise (Musick I mean) of Drums and Trumpets, which they make use of at that time, sufficiently Remonstrates, that the generality of Men when Death is near, desire to be kept from thinking. *Lucretia*, *Portia* and *Camma* died Voluntarily, and might have lived if they wou'd. This Choice indeed bespeaks a vast Stock of Fortitude, yet the loss of her Honour in the one, excessive Grief in the other, and in the Third the Spirit of a Noble Revenge, may well be supposed to have taken up part of their Thoughts, and if we look into the Reason that promtped them to, and the manner in which they embraced Death, we shall find in every one of them, something of Hurry and Tumultuous Passion that shaded the Terror of it, and consequently render'd it more Supportable than it wou'd have been without: But to be so familiar with and entertain Death, to taste of and relish it with so much Presence and Serenity of Mind as *Arria* did, shews an entire Victory over every thing dreadful in it, and requires at least the utmost stretch of Strength that Humane Nature can be capable of. Few Men have handled Death with that Calmness and Tranquility, and those that did had more pressing Occasions and stronger Motives to animate them to it: *Cato Uticensis* laid violent Hands on himself, and died like a *Roman*, when *Pompey* and *Liberty* had lost the Battel, but by his Death he escaped the Hands of a Revengeful Conqueror, whom he had made his mortal Enemy, and *Cato*'s Pride only anticipated what *Cæsar*'s Ambition would have inflicted. *Seneca*, 'tis true, died sedately, but he would have lived longer if *Nero* would have let him; when Death was forced upon him, to chuse the easiest was not inimitable: No body bid *Arria* Die, but all that knew her Conjured her to live, and if she would have abandoned a wretched Husband to his own ill Destiny, *Arria* might many Years have enjoy'd all the Pleasures of an Eminent Rank and a Luxurious City. But the mentioning of *Seneca* has put me in mind of his more Heroick Wife; tho *Arria* in Fortitude has exceeded all the Men, we have yet had more Women of the same stamp; when *Nero* had order'd his Master to depart the World, and that Eminent *Philosopher* was preparing for his latter end with an Intrepidity becoming a Stoik, he shew'd himself only sensible for his Charming *Paulina*, whom he left Young, and exposed to the outrages of a bad Season, and the Insolencies of a Tyrant who had caused it. He endeavoured to perswade her to Live and take Comfort in her own Virtue, and the Goods he had left her to the value of above Ten Millions. But these Indulging and Careful Perswasions were not fit to be used to the Wife of *Seneca*; she remonstrated to him, that the Force of his Example counsell'd her better than that of his Reasons,

and

and taught her as well as *Philoſophy* to Die Reſolutely and with Courage. *Paulina* prevailing in the Conteſt of Love, had her Veins open'd with the ſame Lancet that let out his Blood, and would have followed *Seneca*, had not *Nero* (apprehending leaſt the Death of ſuch an Illuſtrious Lady of ſo high a Reputation, might compleat the drawing on him the Publick Hatred) ſent Soldiers who bound up her Veins, and uſed Violence to make her Live.

But to mix ſome Warlike Heroins among theſe Loving, Peaceable and Domeſtick ones, I ſhall now put in the Renown'd *Britain* Queen *Boadicea*, and after her the famous Maid of *Orleans*; both were expert in Arms, and both had the moſt Valiant Nations of their Times to cope with: The one withſtood the Imperial Eagle, and drove the *Romans* out of *Wales*; the other ſtop'd Victorious *Engliſhmen*, and in all probability hinder'd them from the total Conqueſt of *France*.

Iſabella, Queen of *Caſtile*, the Author of the vaſt Deſign of the *Spaniſh* Monarchy, is ſo Renown'd for her Prudence and Patience, as well as Wit and Courage, that her Name alone may ſerve her for a Panegyrick, it is the Abridgment of a long Hiſtory, and the Subject of many Volumes; but the Heroick Virtue of this Great Princeſs, cannot have a more Magnificent and ample Proof than a Structure, which has the extent of two Hemiſpheres, and comprehends as well Nature already diſcover'd, as that which is to be diſcover'd.

What they ſay of Hawks, that the Females are better than the Males, is at leaſt true of *Spaniards*, if not of other Nations too. *Eleonor* of *Caſtile*, was Married to *Edward*, Prince of *Wales*. This Prince was come back from the Holy Land with a Wound he had received from an impoiſon'd Arrow; the Phyſitians having tried all their Skill, and eſſay'd all Practices in vain, declared to him, that he could not be cured but by the Deſtruction of ſome Perſon who might have the Courage to ſuck in Death with the Poiſon of his Wound. The Virtuous Prince not willing to preſerve his Life by another's Death, prepares himſelf to Die; but the Courageous *Eleonor* thinking herſelf Condemn'd by the ſame Sentence, reſolves to attempt the Cure, and as ſoon as her Prince was a Sleep, gently diſcovers the Wound; then by little and little ſhe ſucks out the Poiſon, and ſo ſeaſonable caſts it forth as to draw all from thence what was Mortal, without returning any part thereof to herſelf.

Joan of *Flanders*, Counteſs of *Montfort*, Commanding in Perſon the Siege of *Henelond*, when the Enemy came to a general Aſſault, aſcended unto the top of a Tower to diſcover the State of the Fight, and diſcerning that but few were left to guard the Beſiegers Camp, She took Horſe, and Sallying forth thro' a Poſtern Gate at the Head of Three Hundred Cuiraſſiers, fired the Enemies Quarters. When *Charles* of *Blois* ſet upon her before the Iſles of *Garnſey*, She ſhew'd that her Valour was for both Elements, and that ſhe had as good a Heart and as Solid a Head in a Ship as upon a Bulwark and in Trenches. She Fought all the Day with a Sword in her Hand, and would not have failed to carry away the Victory, if the Night and a Tempeſt which interven'd, had not prevented her. After that ſhe Beſieg'd *Vannes*, which being taken by Storm, She made her Entry on Horſeback, and like a Conquereſs; having been preſent at many Field Encounters, Sieges and Naval Battels, gain'd all kind of Victories, and deſerved all manner of Crowns, She placed at laſt one upon the Head of her Son.

Marulla of *Stilimena*, her Father being kill'd in the Defence of *Coccin*, with his Sword taking up his Command and Courage, preſents herſelf to thoſe Enemies that appeared the moſt preſſing; ſome ſhe Repels, and knocks down others, and at laſt being ſupported by the rallied Inhabitants, puts to flight what *Turks* ſoever ſhe found in her way, and leads her Companions Fighting even to their Gallies. The ſame Day the Enemy returned to Sea, and left the Victory entire to *Marulla*, and Liberty to *Stilimena*. The General of the *Venetian* Fleet thinking to be at the Fight, came to the Feaſt of it. The People being richly Cloath'd, and the Magiſtrates in their Ceremonial Habits, went out to meet him, and brought to him their Deliverers in Triumph. The General cauſed her to come before the Army rang'd upon the Shoar, where having made a Speech in Commendation of her, he order'd every Soldier to make her a Preſent, and offer'd her for a Husband what Captain ſoever ſhe would pleaſe to chuſe, with Promiſes that he would prevail with the Senate to Innoble him, and allow her a Portion out of the Publick Treaſure: But *Marulla* rendring Thanks to the General for his Preſents and Offers, declined ſo raſh a Choice, and by her Prudent Anſwer ſhew'd, that ſhe was Miſtreſs of Diſcretion as well as Valour. After the ſacking of *Nicoſia*, in the Iſle of *Cyprus*, as the moſt certain Diſpatches of his Victory, *Muſtapha* Orders Four great Veſſels, fill'd with the beſt of the Booty, to be ſent to *Selim*; the Ships were already under Sail, when the Faireſt and moſt Courageous of theſe Miſerable Captives, reflecting on her Liberty, her Honour, her enſlaved and half burnt Country left in the Rear, and ſeing nothing before her but Bondage and Infamy, breath'd forth a Thouſand Maledictions againſt Fortune for preſerving her; and at laſt muſing on ſome daring Attempt, She perceived a Soldier entring into the Powder Room; She went in readily after him, and having found Fire ready at Hand, aſſiſted by her good Angel, ſhe caſt it into a Barrel of Powder. The effect was ſudden, part of the Galley was blown up, the reſt burnt, with Two or Three more that came to her Aſſiſtance.

Thus at the Expence of her Life the Valiant Maid revenged the ſacking of her Country upon the Victorious, and burnt with the Priſon and Bondage of her Companions the Seraglio and Voluptuous Preſent, which *Muſtapha* had imbark'd for *Selim*.

The reſt of the Table expect from Lucinda.

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